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Saturday, August 15, 1936

Subject: "TIPS FOR SOUP CANNERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Our correspondent in Washington, D.C., has been back for another visit to the canning kitchens of the Bureau of Home Economics. Every time she goes there, she comes away chock-full of new ideas for home-canners. This time she's been finding out about homemade soup -- in cans.

She says: "You might suppose that canning soup would be an easy job for anybody, especially an experienced home canner. Well, it is -- if you know how. But letters coming to the Bureau of Home Economics through the years have told a sad tale of many casualties among home-canned soups, for too many cans that spoiled on the pantry shelf.

"So the foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics tackled the problem of discovering safe and economical methods of putting up many different kinds of soup mixtures. That was several years ago. Today they know not only how to put up soup so that it won't spoil, but also how to keep the best flavor in canned soup. Their studies have shown that much spoilage has been due to wrong methods of processing, chiefly to not heating the mixture enough for complete sterilization. They have found that the only safe way to can soup is under pressure. And they also advise using the hot pack.

"So the homemaker who would like to be able to serve homemade soup in a jiffy to her family or company will put up soup mixtures while she is doing her other canning. She will put up vegetable or chicken soup during the summer canning season and meat soups during the winter butchering on the farm.

"The foods people list a round dozen of our common vegetables as best for soup. These are tomatoes, corn, lima beans, peas, okra, carrots, turnips, celery, onion, pimientos, and red and green peppers. They suggest that if you like combination-vegetable soup, you can put up 2 or 3 of these vegetables together. Which combination you choose will depend on your own and your family's taste. I hear that canners in home demonstration clubs in Georgia list as their favorite mixture for home-canned soup equal parts of lima beans, corn and tomatoes. Many people are especially fond of okra and tomato soup seasoned with a little onion. This combination requires less processing than many of the thicker soups.

"Garden herbs also may add much to the flavor of soup in cans. The list of seasonings which the foods people find best for soup include parsley, thyme, bayleaf, and garlic as well as white pepper, dashes of cayenne pepper, salt, and sugar. But whatever seasoning you use, use it sparingly. Too much seasoning can spoil the soup faster than too many cooks.

"The directions for putting up vegetable soup mixtures are very simple. I wrote them down just as the foods people gave them to me, all for the purpose of passing them along to you. Here they are: Wash and trim vegetables -- whichever ones you are

using. Cut them into small pieces or cubes. Keep diced carrots and turnips covered with water or weak brine to prevent darkening. Now bring the soup mixture to the boiling point, add seasonings, and pack hot with enough liquid to cover the vegetables and prevent too dense a pack. Put up in containers and process immediately in your steam pressure canner.

"You can put up soup in glass jars or plain tin cans, whichever you prefer. If you can in tin, the processing time will be a few minutes shorter. At the Bureau they process at 240 degrees Fahrenheit, or 10 pounds pressure. They say pint glass jars of soup need 60 minutes of processing; quart glass jars need 70 minutes. If you are using tin cans, No. 2 cans need 50 minutes processing; No. 3 cans need 65.

"That's the news I've just learned about canning vegetable soup. But that's not all I've learned. I've found out some useful facts about putting up chicken soup, too.

"Maybe you remember the letter I wrote not so long ago about canning chicken. Maybe you remember that I said then that the convenient and economical time to put chicken in cans is when you are culling the flock in summer, removing the nice, plump, 2-year-old hens that aren't paying their keep because they have stopped laying. The bony pieces of those chickens -- wings, backs, necks and feet -- aren't so good for plain canned chicken. But the foods people have found that they make excellent soup. You can use them for making clear chicken broth, or for making canned broth containing rice or barley or noodles, or for that hearty soup known as chicken gumbo which contains not only chicken but also okra, salt pork, tomatoes, parsley and rice.

"Put the bony pieces of chicken in a big kettle and cover them with lightly salted cold water. Bring the water to the simmering point and cook until the meat falls from the bone. Strain and cook down until fairly concentrated for plain clear chicken broth. If you add rice, barley or noodles to the broth be sure they are fresh; otherwise they may give the soup a queer musty taste. You cook these cereals separately from the broth. Then add them hot to the boiling broth. Pack hot in cans, and process immediately.

"That brings me back to what I said at the beginning of this letter. The hot-pack and pressure processing are the 2 important ways of insuring success with your canned soup. All the investigations of the foods people have proved it."

Our correspondent bids us good-bye at this point, adding, "Yours for better home-canned soups."

